

House Republicans Continue to Choose Confrontation Over Compromise

“The GOP has become an insurgent outlier in American politics. It is ideologically extreme; scornful of compromise; unmoved by conventional understanding of facts, evidence and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition.”

– Thomas Mann and Norm Ornstein [Washington Post, [4/27/12](#)]

Since taking the House majority, Republicans have chosen confrontation over compromise, choosing to move to the extreme right instead of moving to the middle and finding common ground. For over a year, Republicans have refused to work with Democrats, clinging to their partisan stance and walking away from:

- Meaningful action to address the deficit, so that they could give tax cuts to the wealthy
- Legislation to keep the government working for Americans, taking us to the brink of a government shutdown
- Debt limit negotiations to avoid default and ensure America paid its bills
- A bipartisan Senate compromise to extend middle class tax cuts and unemployment insurance

Their most recent track record is no different:

- This week, House Republicans refuse to take up a bipartisan Senate bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.
 - The Senate bill passed **with 68 votes, including all female Republican Senators**, yet House Republicans are moving forward with their own partisan version: *“In an all-too-rare show of bipartisanship, 15 Senate Republicans joined with the Democratic majority last month to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act... Unfortunately, the lopsided 68-to-31 Senate vote halted G.O.P. opponents only temporarily. The House Judiciary Committee last week approved its version of the reauthorization bill, which not only omits improvements the Senate bill made to the law but also removes existing protections for immigrant*

women, putting them at greater risk of domestic and sexual abuse.” [NY Times Editorial, [5/13/12](#)]

- House Republicans have also been unable to coalesce around a highway bill, yet they refuse to take up a bipartisan Senate bill.
 - Instead of working with Democrats to pass the bipartisan Senate bill, which passed **with 74 votes**, they put forward a partisan bill that would destroy jobs, rolls back safety and environmental standards, and fails to meet our nation’s infrastructure needs.
 - Even conservative Senator James Inhofe has had to remind House Republicans to compromise on a bill that has historically enjoyed bipartisan support: *“It was a conservative Oklahoma Republican who told the House GOP not to even start. At the beginning of Tuesday’s conference committee negotiations on a transportation reauthorization bill, Sen. James Inhofe threw cold water on any hopes House Republicans had that their Senate colleagues would put up a fight with Democrats on the long-delayed bill, lecturing conservatives from the House on the art of compromise.”* [Roll Call, [5/9/12](#)]
- House Republicans are also feeling pressure to prevent student loan interest rates from doubling on over 7.4 million students. But instead of working with Democrats on a bipartisan bill, House Republicans passed a partisan measure that would eliminate critical public health funding in order to pay for the extension of lower rates – a bill that won’t become law, adding to the uncertainty millions of families are facing.

And all signs indicate that House Republicans won’t be changing course anytime soon:

- *“The bipartisan efforts of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) on a range of issues have attracted grumblings from the right.”* [[The Hill, 5/14/12](#)]
- *“In hindsight, [Republicans] say, they wish they had fought harder during battles over government funding and the debt ceiling...So, in downtime in Washington, lawmakers are busy building new alliances — and strengthening old ones — to gird themselves for the confrontations ahead.”* [Politico, [5/13/12](#)]